

Northwestern | WIRTZ CENTER

A FEW SHORT PLAYS TO SAVE THE WORLD



AND WHAT YOU DID

BY STEVE HARPER

JAN 22-24 2021

NEW VIRTUAL PERFORMANCE

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Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts and

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proudly present

A FEW SHORT PLAYS TO SAVE THE WORLD & WHAT YOU DID

Written by Steve Harper

DIRECTED BY
Tor Campbell

PRODUCTION TEAM

Associate Producer
ISMAEL LARA

Production and Costume Designer
MEEKA POSTMAN

Production and Scenic Designer
JOE JOHNSON

Stage Manager/Assistant Director
DANIEL MATON

CAST

Adam / Man
JARRIS AL'JALEEL MCGHEE

Indira / Woman
JASMINE SHARMA

Ted / Guy
JARED SON

Robert / White Man
BENNETT PETERSEN

January 22–24
Virtual Performance
Available On-Demand

The running time for this production is 35 minutes.

The Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts is a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American Theatre.

Program Cover & Promotional Artwork by Melissa Rutherford
Program Editors: Chris Wych and Owen Kiley

Special Thanks to Jasmine Gunter

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I remember sitting in church bored listening to the pastor preach, but the moment the choir burst into song, I felt my spirit stir, my body move to the music, and suddenly a little boy became engaged and connected to the pastor's words. Through music, I understood on a visceral level the message he was trying to deliver to the congregation. I soon discovered a constant: if something was presented in an artistic form, the information was easier for me to absorb and retain. I could relate to the experience and understand better what was being conveyed in a non-artistic manner. Art opened my heart and I listened. Art is a weapon used to expand minds, provoke empathy and inspire change. *A Few Short Plays to Save the World* uses this weapon to try to save the Earth and *What You Did* uses this weapon to address some of the opinions and prejudices within the human race. I hope these pieces inspire you to continue to create art that will move people to change.

Tor Campbell

ABOUT THE PLAYS

These two short plays tackle some of the thorniest and most urgent issues of equity facing our country today through the lens that we know best: the work of the theater artist. Wryly hilarious and startlingly direct, these contemporary pieces fling us into high stakes situations at full speed; alongside the puzzled characters, we are left to try to make sense of the blunt racial disparities we are complicit in. What is the responsibility of the artist in serving the greater good? Is it possible to make a real difference by making plays? Jovial aliens, fierce women, playwrights just trying to get heard: everyone's jumping into the fray.

CAST BIOS

TOR CAMPBELL (Director) Tor's experience is wide and varied, and has extensive creative direction credits both domestically and internationally, most notably in The Venetian Hotel & Sands in Macau, China. On a national level, he has choreographed and directed numerous productions. Additionally, he has independently developed several innovative and unique Performing Arts programs, encompassing the many varied aspects of the Musical Theater experience, from casting and recruitment, the development of dance/voice/acting, to workshops in technical and stage management.

MEEKA POSTMAN (Costume / Production Designer) Meeka graduated with honors from Western Michigan University with a B.F.A in Design and Technical Production, emphasizing in Costume Design and Crafts. Recently Meeka has worked in New York City both as a milliner for Arnold S. Levine Inc, and a crafts artisan for Mio Design NYC. Recent credits include The Witches of Eastwick (Western Michigan University), Diary of Anne Frank (Farmer's Alley Theatre), Dolly Parton's Smoky Mountain Christmas Carol (Emerson Colonial Theatre, assistant for Linda Roethke), Top Girls (Remy Bumpo Theatre Company, co-design with Raquel Adorno), and Fun Home (Northwestern University). Meeka is a third-year MFA in Stage Design candidate at Northwestern University

JOE JOHNSON (Scenic / Production Designer) Joe Johnson is a third year set design MFA candidate here at Northwestern. Past productions at Northwestern have been Legally Blonde and The Glass Menagerie. Joe is grateful to have this opportunity to work on a new way of making theatre in this time with wonderful collaborators.

DANIEL MATON (Stage Manager/Assistant Director) Daniel Maton is a first-year Theatre student originally from Melbourne, Australia, but currently living in The Netherlands. Daniel is very excited to be working on his first production at Northwestern. He is also working on the Waa-Mu Show and The Dolphin Show. Recent credits include The Laramie Project, Bright Star, and In The Heights at the American School of The Hague and A Christmas Carol at Theatre Aan Het Spui, The Hague.

ISMAEL LARA, JR. (Associate Producer) is a Latine director, educator, organizer, and producer from Southeast Texas and is currently an MFA Directing candidate at Northwestern. He is focused on championing work that aids the fight against injustice, creating a bridge between underrepresented communities and the theatrical institution. Ismael is a recipient of the 2019 Hangar Drama League Fellowship.

JARRIS AL'JALEEL MCGHEE (Adam / Man)

JARED SON (Ted / Guy) A sophomore at Northwestern, Jared Son is from South Korea studying acting, playwriting, and directing for plays and musicals. He is currently on the writing team for the 90th Annual Waa-Mu Show after working and being a part of the show last year. Some of his favorite roles have been Lopakhin in AMTP's Cherry Orchard and Tom in The Glass Menagerie. Jared is thrilled to be in this production of two plays by Steve Harper.

CAST BIOS

JASMINE SHARMA (Indira / Woman) Jasmine Sharma is a actor/playwright/activist graduating from Northwestern University come March, 2021. Favorite Northwestern credits include Next to Normal (Natalie), The Angry Brigade (Henderson) and The Mee-Ow Show. Jasmine's writing has been produced from New York to Los Angeles, Alaska to The Kennedy Center ACTF. Jasmine has been commissioned by AlterTheater Ensemble, and is a member of The Road Theatre's Under Construction 2021-2022 Cohort. She is represented by CHI Talent Management.

BENNETT PETERSEN (Robert / White Man) Bennett Petersen (he/him) is a Junior studying Theatre, Musical Theatre, and Musical Theatre Writing. He is a Writing Coordinator for the 90th Annual Waa-Mu Show, an ensemble member of TBD: A Neo-Futurist Inspired Performance Art Group, and a member of Northwestern Undertones A Cappella, where he serves as the Producer and Business Manager. Favorite acting credits include Imagine U's Winnie The Pooh (Christopher Robin) and Lovers and Madmen's Children of Eden (Abel/Ham).

STEVE HARPER (Author) grew up in a house with a Catholic father and a mother obsessed with Stephen King and true crime novels. As a playwright and TV writer, he enjoys working on character-based dramas that make use of magical realism. Steve is currently supervising producer on the CW superhero drama STARGIRL. He was a producer on the popular CBS Drama GOD FRIENDED ME. Steve was co-producer on mystery series TELL ME YOUR SECRETS (premiering on Amazon Prime Video in 2021). His original web series, SEND ME premiered on BET.com in 2016 and garnered an EMMY nomination for series star Tracie Thoms. Steve was Executive Producer and creator of the series as well as one of the series leads. Steve's plays have been produced and developed by # WhileWeBreathe, Dreamcatcher Repertory Theatre, Theater Project (New Jersey), Classical Theater of Harlem, New York Theatre Workshop, New York Stage & Film, The 24 hour Plays on Broadway, Freedom Train Productions, New Professional Theatre, Summer Play Festival/Naked Angels, Tribeca Theatre Festival, American Theatre Company (Chicago), Falcon Theatre, Sacred Fools Theater, Malibu Playhouse, Georgia Southern University, Loyola Marymount University and The Celebration Theatre (LA). His plays include Three People, Urban Rabbit Chronicles, Princeton Theory, Almost, Black/Out Stories, and The Escape Artist's Children, and Actual Cost (Juilliard /100th Anniversary: published by The Kenyon Review Online). Steve is a graduate of Yale, The A.R.T. Institute at Harvard, The CBS Writers Mentoring Program and the playwriting program at Juilliard. Steve is also a certified Creativity Coach specializing in helping writers craft dramatic scripts and launch professional careers.

SETTINGS

A Few Short Plays to Save the World: A blue glow with a white light illuminating each character. The surrounding space is indistinct, but ultra-high tech somehow.

What You Did: A step and repeat at a film festival.

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